



File Code: 2810

Date: January 9, 2012

Dear Interested Parties:

A Plan of Operations was recently submitted by Mr. Robert March for mineral exploration. The project is located on the Mt. Taylor Ranger District, Cibola National Forest. The legal land description for the operation is Township 12 North, Range 9 West, section 10, New Mexico Prime Meridian. Note: the project area is outside of the Mt. Taylor Traditional Cultural Property (TCP). The area can be accessed by proceeding northeast from Grants, NM on State Highway 547 for approximately 5 miles to forest road 450F, turn northwest and proceed approximately 6.5 miles to the project area (see attached map).

This proposal only addresses mineral exploration. It consists of drilling and extracting core samples. Up to 2 drill holes will be approved pending an Environmental Analysis for this project. The project area will be accessed via existing roads; however, a minor amount of overland travel will occur within the project area. Minor amounts of vegetation may be cleared to place equipment within the drill pad areas. The maximum size disturbance of the work drill pad will be 75ft. x 150ft. Due to known uranium mineralization in the broader area, radiation readings will be taken at the surface prior to commencement of any disturbance or work. Mr. March will be responsible for keeping any drill fluids and drill cuttings confined to the drill pad area and upon final reclamation the site must meet background radiation readings at those pads. Mr. March will also be required to backfill the drill hole from the bottom to the top using today's standards mandated by the State of New Mexico's Statute **19.10.3.302(L)** *"Each drill hole shall be plugged from total depth to within 2 feet of the original ground surface or the collar of the hole, whichever is lower, with a column of cement, high-density bentonite clay or other materials specified in the permit..."* After the project is complete, the proponent will scarify, re-seed and fertilize any disturbed areas. The Forest Service in conjunction with New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division will bond the project and release the bond in its entirety or incrementally only after reclamation has been achieved.

The Forest Service will conduct an archeological report, biological report and consult with affected Native American Tribes in the area.

The United States mining law, as amended, authorizes mineral exploration and development of locatable minerals on public lands. Consequently, the Forest Service may not prohibit mineral exploration on public lands. However, it is incumbent upon the agency to insure that all mineral activities are conducted in a manner that will minimize negative impacts and provide for reclamation of surface resources.

This letter initiates the National Environmental Policy Act process required by law. The Forest Service is conducting an environmental analysis to comply with NEPA and assist in making a decision. To be most effective in helping the Forest Service to conduct the environmental analysis, please send your comments to us before January 15, 2012. We appreciate your time and interest in considering this matter. Comments



should be addressed to: Calvin Parson, Cibola National Forest Geologist, 2113 Osuna Rd. NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87113.

Comments received, including names and addresses, will be considered part of the public record for this project, and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215 or 217.

Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the requester is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within seven days.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Matthew P Reidy*  
MATTHEW P. REIDY  
District Ranger

cc: Calvin Parson